

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Jungle Academy: Molding White Supremacy in American Police Recruits

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ABSTRACT This article examines how white supremacy is embedded and also made invisible in the molding, crafting, and training of police-recruit bodies. I use the term *molding* to describe the process of manufactured sculpting through the manipulable material of police recruits. Through ethnography of a composite police academy made up of academies from several US cities, this article demonstrates how white supremacy is ordered, maintained, infused, and embodied. I argue that the *jungle academy* produces a form of active reshaping of everyday young citizens into police through the recruit process: a physical, emotional, and mental re-forming. This work is situated in scholarship on embodiment, race, and the state, and demonstrates how to methodologically examine the corporeal and ontological aspects of racialized state violence. It also demonstrates how an anthropology of white supremacy provides insight into how white governance is intimately tied to the embodiment of the state through the institution of the police. [*white supremacy, police, race, gender, United States*]

RESUMEN Este artículo examina cómo la supremacía blanca esta embebida y también hecha invisible en el moldeado, la elaboración y el entrenamiento de los cuerpos de los reclutas de la policía. Uso el término *moldeado* para describir el proceso de esculpido manufacturado a través del material fácilmente manipulable de los reclutas de la policía. A través de la etnografía de una academia de policía compuesta de reclutas de varias ciudades de Estados Unidos, este artículo demuestra cómo la supremacía blanca es ordenada, mantenida, infundida y corporeizada. Argumento que la *academia de la selva* produce una forma de remodelación activa de ciudadanos jóvenes, comunes en policías a través de un proceso de reclutamiento: una re-formación física, emocional y mental. Este trabajo está situado en la investigación sobre corporeización, raza y el estado, y demuestra cómo examinar metodológicamente los aspectos corpóreos y ontológicos de la violencia de estado racializada. También demuestra cómo una antropología de la supremacía blanca provee entendimiento sobre cómo la gobernanza blanca esta íntimamente conectada con la corporeización del estado a través de la institución de la policía. [*supremacía blanca, policía, raza, género, Estados Unidos*]

Trainer: Is the media accurate?
 Recruits: No, sir!
 Trainer: Do they slant their views?
 Recruits: Yes, sir!
 Trainer: Do you ever let your prejudices influence your policing?
 Recruits: No, sir!
 Trainer: Is there any way to turn off your prejudices?
 Recruits: No, sir!
 Trainer: How do you turn if off?

A Black female recruit raises her hand and is given permission to speak.

Recruit: You need to separate your opinions from the decision you make, sir.
 Trainer: You don't treat everyone the same but you treat them fairly. You will change as a police officer. There's cocky cops and burnt-out cops. . . . To be the best you can, you have to understand and value the diversity [of the city]. . . . To protect and to serve. Trust for police departments is important. If we get in trouble for violating someone's civil rights it can be expensive. Anything you throw into the diversity category is pretty much protected by civil rights. I am not here to make you unprejudiced. . . . The key is to not act on them. That's violence. Look at how you manage conflict. Look at you as people.

Trainer points to a small Hispanic female recruit.

Trainer: Could she have been an officer in the '60s?

Silence as recruits look around uncomfortably.

Trainer: Then, they were six-foot white males. The city decided that the department should represent the citizens based on diversity of the city. We used to want people to be the same and that's just the way it worked out. The idea is that we value your diversity and that is reflected in the new recruits.

Trainer: Who here has prejudices?

Silence. Some recruits slowly raise their hands.

Trainer: Who has no prejudice?

Silence. No one raises their hand.

Trainer: Who here has prejudices!?

Almost in unison, everyone raises their hand.

Trainer: Are stereotypes true?

A few recruits respond tentatively, some shake their heads.

Recruits: No.

Trainer glares at recruits with irritation at their meek response.

Trainer: Are stereotypes true?

Without hesitating, the trainer states matter of factly:

Trainer: Absolutely true.

Chuckling to himself he follows:

Trainer: Well, some of it is, but not all of it. Certain people might fit a stereotype but that doesn't make everything true. Is race uncomfortable to talk about? Yes. Why? Because it's easy to offend people.

This cultural diversity training excerpted from my fieldnotes demonstrates the militaristic tone infused in the aura of every call and response between the trainer and recruits. At first, recruits answer the trainer with confidence, "Yes, sir!" in response to his queries about media bias as inaccurate and prejudiced against police. But as recruits are asked about racism and their own biases, they are less certain how they should respond. Does the trainer want them to answer honestly? Should they admit their biases to the class? The militaristic structure of this training seems to contradict the topic of the course: cultural diversity. Instead, it enhances the performance of militarized uniformity. Military culture emphasizes a cohesive group where expressions of stoic depersonalization are preferred. These expressions are assumed to model the expectation that the unit's goals are placed ahead of personal goals. In militaristic structurings, the superior is understood as having ultimate authority over all aspects of the officer's/soldier's life through commands that must be obeyed. This training is part of the mundane molding techniques that instill such militarized uniformity in young, new police officers. The training shows recruits are taught that stereotypes and bias are seemingly ingrained and unsurmountable—unavoidable and ahistorical—and that violating someone's civil rights isn't necessarily wrong but, as the trainer stated, "expensive."

If anthropologists could reframe the cultural diversity training, we might suggest that educating recruits on histories of structural racism might be helpful to produce empathy between police and impoverished communities. To promote more positive forms of cultural diversity, the academy might offer courses on the systematic impact of racial policies on communities of color since slavery. Recruits might learn how for-profit prisons have incentivized mass incarceration, where increased fines and court fees contribute to spiraling debt (Davis 2006). They could be shown that the attack and loss of affirmative action programs have enabled the resegregation of schools, or how "urban redevelopment" through gentrification has caused displacement that further increases inequality along racial lines (Chang 2016). However, police, who are disproportionately on the front lines of recruiting for the prison-industrial complex, are not taught about displacement and segregation. They are not given context about the unequal access to services, white flight, the redlining of districts, and overall disinvestment in Black and Brown communities that impact the communities they will serve (Kurashige 2017).

Instead, they are trained to aggressively pursue "dangerous criminals" through a militarized logic that reinforces a police quota infrastructure intended to supplement

shrinking city budgets (Opatow 2016). Recruits are trained to fear “cultural diversity” on the streets. During a different training, a retired commanding officer described the communities that recruits should expect to encounter: “There’s violence. Language barriers. The community fears us, and they’re overrun by gangs . . . [You’re thinking], ‘I’m over my head. I’m scared.’ . . . It’s the incremental steps that can take you to the dark side.”

The retired commander describes the danger of turning to “the dark side,” where impressionable officers in gang-infested environments can become “incrementally” corrupted through exposure to these neighborhoods and people. Akin to the colonial language used by Europeans to describe physical and mental deterioration of whites who “went native” and spent too much time in “the tropics” (Benz 1997, 51), the retired commander produces a similar racialized topography. This type of “tropicalization” of urban poor communities by police can be seen in the oft-cited “jungle” metaphor that officers use to describe the streets they patrol (Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman 1997). Peter Moskos (2008, 39), who enlisted in the Baltimore police academy as an academic researcher and became an officer for a year, says the “real” training begins in “the ghetto”—described by officers as a hopeless “jungle”:

One black officer said, “It’s hard not to think that this is a jungle here. People running around in the street at all hours. Getting high, acting like fools. . . . They ought to tear everything down. All of it!” A white officer echoed this belief: “I’d like to napalm the whole area. Wouldn’t that be beautiful?”

Recruits are trained to subscribe to a uniform group mentality as they encounter the excursionist fantasy of patrolling the “urban jungle.” I see this as a *jungle logic*, a subsidiary of what Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Tufuku Zuberi (2008, 17–20) call “White logic,” which is how “White supremacy has defined the techniques and processes of reasoning about social facts.” White logic “grants eternal objectivity to the views of elite Whites” and “is the anchor of the Western imagination” (17). These jungle logics, or implicit notions that racial others are inherently “primitive,” “backwards,” and “dangerous,” are foundational to overarching white logics. Jungle logics also provide for the adventurous thrill of white supremacy, the lure of excursions into racial otherness and criminality that reinforces the presumption of white superiority. Jungle logics support the dehumanization of Black and Brown life. The jungle logic subsidiary of white logic is thus a crucial element in the predatory trajectory of policing as a career.

In this article, I examine how these white supremacist jungle logics are methodologically crafted and molded into the beginning of police careers through the impressionable bodies of police recruits. I use the term *molding* to describe the process of manufactured sculpting through the easily manipulable material of police recruits. Police recruits—often with little education beyond high school and looking for secure employment without college degrees—provide an

impressionable form with which to shape white supremacist norms in the police academy.¹ Through ethnography of a composite US police academy made up of several cities that I observed, I explore how white supremacy is ordered, maintained, infused, trained, and embodied through the molding of recruits.² I argue that the *jungle academy* produces a form of active reshaping of everyday young citizens into police through the recruit process—a physical, emotional, and mental re-forming. This work is situated in the scholarship of embodiment, race, and the state, demonstrating how we can methodologically explore the corporeal and ontological aspects of racialized state violence. An anthropology of white supremacy can thus provide insight into how white governance is intimately tied to the embodiment of the state through the institution of the police. Ethnography, I demonstrate, provides an entry into the mundane ordering, naturalization, and infusing of white supremacy as part of American life.

CULTURAL “DIVERSITY”

The cultural diversity training described above was touted by the trainer as teaching recruits the need to respect cultural diversity and difference in policing. However, for anthropologists who take pride in teaching about power in culture and diversity, there are some striking elements. First, the drill-sergeant structure of answer/response leaves little room for recruit diversity. It tells them: although the world might be culturally diverse, as a police officer, you must become *one of us*. The drill-sergeant approach to cultural diversity also enhances a right-versus-wrong attitude. Rather than trying to use cultural diversity training to break down or overcome stereotypes or implicit bias, the drill instructor reinforces these. Recruits are told to accept the idea that everyone is always prejudiced—that bias is simply a part of the American way of life.

The naturalization of bias became more apparent later that same day. During a discussion, the new recruit class was supposed to set the ground rules for the rest of their time in the academy. The recruits broke into groups to discuss suggestions for what their class should be allowed to do and not do, and then they put their responses to a vote. One white male recruit offered, “Be motivational.” The trainer then indicated whether he felt their suggestion was appropriate or not. This was supposed to be an exercise done without the assistance of the trainer, but the trainer had a difficult time letting the recruits conduct the class experiment without correcting or interjecting. For instance, to the “be motivational” recruit, the trainer responded, “Is it appropriate to holler motivational chants during class?” “No, sir!” the class stated in unison. A white female recruit then suggested that instead of standing to state their names, they might raise their hands, state their name, but stay seated. The trainer interjected, “Well that depends on instructor. I prefer for you to stand and say your name.”

The room became quiet. It seemed they were having difficulty figuring out how to proceed. The trainer’s

interjections produced a sense of uncertainty in their awkward exchanges. It did not seem to dawn on the trainer that he might be the problem. He nervously walked around the room as if stalking prey and yelling from different points in the classroom space. At a few points, he walked by the back of the room where I was seated and began to discuss the training with me. He told me, “this was for their socialization process,” to “learn how to act together as a group.”

Frustrated by their lack of progress, the trainer told them to brainstorm “who they are.” He yelled, “Where do your core values come from? Your beliefs, values, opinions, norms? What are your morals? The guidelines that make up your attitude?”

“Think of all of the places you got your social programming?” The trainer gave examples: “your family,” “the military,” and “whatever else you come up with.”

A Black male recruit stood, chin held high, and rigidly placed his arms to his sides, emphasized with a light slapping sound, and said loud and firm: “Your culture, sir!”

The trainer appeared to be confused by the answer. His eyebrows knit together and he squinted his eyes, slightly shaking his head indicating that he didn’t understand what the Black recruit had meant. Still standing erect, the Black recruit clarified by stating again, “Your background, sir!” The trainer appeared to still not understand, with a look of bewilderment on his face, hands clasped behind his back. The Black recruit, seeming to catch on that he needed to disidentify with his cultural heritage, said, “Be open-minded about other people’s cultures, sir.” Apparently pleased with this, the trainer smiled and nodded his head. It was then put on the board by the recruit-class leader as “Be open-minded.”

The recruit-class leader, a young white male who had been writing the terms on the board, was asked to direct the class to decide on the final list of appropriate behaviors that they would all abide by for the remainder of the academy. The class leader fumbled through the process, as if nervous by the copresence of the trainer and his discerning gaze. Different recruits would stand, address one of the items on the list, and state why they felt the item should be removed. A white male recruit stood and stated that “Be open-minded” (the suggestion made in the exchange between the Black male recruit and the trainer) should be removed because it was the same as, “Be respectful of others’ opinions.”

The trainer interjected: “Keep in mind, we’re going to have lesbian and gay and transgender people come and they might be different from your opinion. So, you’re going to have to be open-minded here.”

“Be open-minded” remained on the board.

Getting frustrated with the lack of direction by the recruit-class leader, the trainer hollered: “This is the only time you’ll have a democracy!”

The final class rules were written on the board as follows:

- Raise hand
- When in doubt ask
- Command respect

- Be respectful of others opinions
- Be motivational
- Be open-minded
- Participate

It’s curious that this lesson in group socialization touted as a “cultural diversity training” ended with the trainer’s assertion that “This is the only time you’ll have a democracy!” Indeed, the entire exchange was about molding police *sameness* rather than addressing cultural diversity or democratic practice. When the Black male recruit attempted to interject how his family had taught him a unique cultural perspective, this was unwelcome, and he was strategically redirected until he gave an answer that disidentified with his heritage, moving him away from seeing himself as different or as an individual. From “my culture,” he was reframed to “be open-minded about other people’s cultures,” which emphasized the removal of his own identity as a Black recruit to reinforce his purported officer neutrality—a form of *molding*. As the casting process of paleoanthropology has shown, molding is “inherently destructive” to the molded object (Antón 2012, 135). Ruth Benedict (2013[1934], 254–55) discussed the “moulding force” of society, arguing that most people are enormously malleable, like “plastic,” and readily take the form presented to them. This structured shaping is an anti-artistic form of sculpting, the production of replicas of imperfect sameness. This erasure of Blackness in the name of neutrality is thus part of the molding of white normativity’s white supremacy.

During this exchange, the feigned ignorance of the trainer became a clear example of his work to mold the Black recruit. Through his body language, the trainer shaped the exchange, providing a reward system in which the trainer’s pleasure is the recruit’s prize. A drama of knit brows, squinting eyes, and a look of bewilderment was out of character for the trainer’s terse, commanding demeanor. He used visible signs of pleasure—head nods, a slight smile, and a look of agreement in his eyes—that indicated to the Black recruit that he was appropriately revising his response. Ultimately, the trainer wanted the Black recruit to shift his emphasis from the value of his own tradition to “other people’s cultures.” It displayed the desired outcome of the trainer, which was a move from *thinking civilian* (as an individual) to *thinking police* (as a member of the group)—a molding of sameness.

Cultural diversity was acknowledged not to celebrate the diversity of recruits but to establish an understanding that police will encounter so-called others, different from the homogeneous officers. As police forces become more diverse, there is often the expectation that this will translate into better relations with the diverse communities they patrol. The idea is that more representation on the force is part of reducing structural inequalities tied to histories of white supremacy. However, as this cultural diversity training shows, the imagined cultural capital that “diverse” officers might bring with them is devalued and discarded by training forms that force recruits to adopt a transcendental

postracial “blue identity” structured by white normativity. As noted by Angela Davis, diversity is “the difference that doesn’t make a difference.”³

The discarding of cultural capital and producing of white supremacist sameness was especially apparent when the white male recruit wanted to remove “Be open-minded” from the list, claiming that it was the same as “Be respectful of others’ opinions.” The trainer overrode this decision by declaring that as a police officer they would encounter “lesbian and gay and transgender people” and would therefore need to “be open-minded.” Assuming that none of the recruits or officers they would patrol with would identify themselves as lesbian, gay, or transgender, the heteronormative cis-male whiteness was further entrenched as the standard police body that recruits must ascribe to throughout the academy. Constant reminders abounded that ensured that those who did not fit the white hetero cis-male body understood that they were out of place. The trainer pointing out that the young Latina recruit could never have been an officer in the 1960s is just one example.

Training processes, I argue, are key to ensuring the invisible whiteness of police bodies. Training is crucial to how police bodies are shaped into a replicable order. When discussing the discomfort of talking about race, the trainer told the recruits that “it’s easy to offend people” and that even though someone “might fit a stereotype,” that “doesn’t make everything true,” but “some of it is true.” This reduction of systemic racism to an issue of political correctness is a way to erase structural white supremacy. It is a dog whistle used to place blame on people of color, displacing the history of slavery, structural inequality, violence, and white racial dominance and governance. In the microcosm of the training, it further entrenched stereotyped divides that placed a burden on the nonwhite recruits to demonstrate that they were not “those type of people of color” who were “sensitive” about race. This consistent approach of erasing systematic violence and displacing histories of racial and gender inequality instructs recruits that they must ignore and disavow structural racism in order to embrace their jobs as police. In this process, the “stereotyped” bodies in the room, such as the Black male or small Latina, are intimately juxtaposed to the inherent whiteness of the blue. They must contend with the assumption that the stereotypes about them are “mostly true.” To fit in, these stereotyped recruits must consume and absorb the ideological conditioning and internalization of white supremacy, perform deference and malleability, and attain physical athleticism with macho comradery.

Yet, even as recruits are taught to suppress their identification as people of color, their Black and Brown bodies remain hypervisible. White supremacy simultaneously creates hard lines of racial difference while also expecting and policing conformity to white norms. It is this contradiction that makes it difficult to pin down. I understand white supremacy as maintained and enacted through a nurturing system of whiteness as normative; that is how “white

(Eurocentric) cultural products including value systems and aesthetic ideals, and worldviews” are established as standard and how this normativity might be *extended* to nonwhite people (Stubblefield 2005, 74–75). In this, racial identity is “a social location where norms converge” rather than an attribute of people’s bodies (75). The act of conforming away from racial identity toward police identity, such as in the example of the Black recruit, thus allows for a convergence of white norms. Recruits are expected to affirm white norms as categorically superior, even when their bodies are also clearly marked in their racial difference. This is an ontological puzzle that Frantz Fanon ([1952] 1970) has described as part of the *blackening* gaze of white supremacy. The process of molding is always a fantasy because nonwhite officers will never meet the ideal of whiteness and remain permanently stigmatized, proximate, and extended elements of whiteness, even as they are denied its privileges and protections.

DIVERSIFYING WHITENESS

The shared demographics between police and white fascist groups have been well documented, as both are committed to the hierarchy of the established social order and the maintenance of a white-dominated society (Novick 1999, 83; Perry 2009, 30).⁴ The most common image of American white supremacy is the Jim Crow South, where Ku Klux Klan patrols and police collaborated to maintain white social dominance during Reconstruction (Jenkins 1970). Throughout the United States, police recruited Klansmen as early as the 1920s, and in some places whole Klaverns were deputized (Williams 2015, 128–29).⁵ In many of these cities, the Klan controlled fire and police departments and local commissions and had deputized members among prominent businessmen, senators, and state representatives. In addition to violently attacking racial minorities, police/white fascists targeted left-leaning political groups, using beatings, murder, bombings, and arson to maintain their hold on local power structures (Williams 2015, 242).⁶ During the late 1960s, “the Legion of Justice conducted a series of burglaries, beatings, and arson attacks on behalf of the Chicago Police,” and “in San Diego, the Secret Army Organization—a group led by an FBI informant and armed with \$10,000 worth of Bureau-supplied weaponry—was busy beating up Chicano activists, trashing the offices of radical newspapers, and attempting to assassinate anti-war organizers” (242). In his memoir, former chief of police of Atlanta Herbert Jenkins (1970, 4) recounted that throughout the South, “it was helpful to join the Ku Klux Klan to be an accepted member of the force.” He described it as “your ID card” and “badge of honor with the in-group,” and it was considered an allegiance that was “stronger than the policeman’s oath to society” (4).

The fight to diversify police departments was hardly easy. It was not until August 8, 1969, that Richard Nixon issued Executive Order 11478b to end discrimination in federal service based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability and allow women to carry firearms, make arrests, and execute search warrants. Subsequently,

a number of lawsuits across the country during the 1970s and 1980s were filed against police departments to end discrimination in the hiring of law enforcement and increase the number of women and minorities (Bolton and Faegan 2004). Prior to these hard-fought efforts to diversify police forces, it was taken as a given that law enforcement officers were large white men. In the 1970s, the Hispanic Society of New York noted that department height requirements were a way to exclude Latinos from law enforcement, and in 1972, the Civil Rights Act was amended to include law enforcement height requirements as discriminatory.

However, police agencies have been slow to hire outside of the “six-foot white male” sameness described by the trainer. It wasn’t until the Obama administration that active attention was placed on hiring practices as part of changing policing cultures. The Obama administration’s President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing emphasized that hiring was a crucial component of transforming policing into a more “just” practice. On September 13, 2016, a day-long forum was held by the US Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) that brought together approximately fifty practitioners from state agencies, police labor organizations, police psychology, academia, and “professional associations representing, police chiefs, sheriffs, women in law enforcement, Hispanic command officers, mayors, the transgender community, and police trainers” to explore the role of effective hiring in twenty-first-century policing.⁷ They found that whereas previously police-hiring practices were designed to exclude candidates, “weed out criminals,” and identify unsuitable applicants, it is more important to identify recruits who exhibit more positive traits that are necessary for the twenty-first-century law enforcement officer.

The workshop participants advocated moving away from the hiring of “warrior” types toward recruiting candidates who would exhibit the empathetic “guardian” approach to policing (see also, Balko 2013). They reasoned that whereas the warrior elements of law enforcement could be taught, the guardian qualities needed to be in place prior to hiring. Necessary guardian qualities include empathy, a service orientation, integrity, human-relations skills, team orientation, and problem-solving skills.⁸ Throughout the country, departments have shifted their hiring practices to produce more diverse recruits who better represent the cities they serve. However, this has not been without resistance.⁹

Across the country, there is stagnation in the recruitment of new officers, and while often attributed to low pay and the dangers involved in policing, for many, the toxic culture of policing is to blame. This is a serious concern for officials who have pledged hundreds of thousands of dollars to recruitment and pay raises. The stagnant growth of police departments in high-crime cities speaks to other, more systemic problems. Black and Brown officers I’ve spoken to describe their time at the academy as “toxic” and “hostile.” They discussed being treated like children or made fun of

through macho hazing. In one city where I researched, treatment in the academy was given as the main reason for quitting law enforcement early in officers’ careers. In this case, over sixty officers resigned in 2017, including a dozen new recruits. Although they hired over one hundred new recruits, they only netted twenty-five new officers. While these recruits enjoyed working with the public, they reported toxic treatment, such as being belittled, publicly scolded, and bullied. They mentioned a disorganized academy with rushed training that contributed to an unhealthy department. They described a boot-camp-style instruction that focused more on producing “tough guys” than ensuring lessons were properly learned.

Recruits are trained to expect submission or deploy violence. The question isn’t whether they will use force but rather how much and what type of force they should use. Conversations in police training, practice, and procedure are always tactical in the sense that engagement with people is always seen as combative and dangerous. However, it is often difficult for people interested in police reform to pin down just what about the academy, and policing in general, is so toxic. The unnamed culprit of white supremacy is often left out of the equation—with the discussion instead revolving around a move from warrior to guardian. What is often left unstated is that the so-called warrior-guardian is actually an embodied white supremacist social arrangement. Indeed, even the benevolent guardian is a white male protector—a good-soldier, white-savior figure. This “tactical athlete,” as I will examine, is infused with Aryan-inspired body logics and fascist intimacies.

TACTICAL ATHLETES

“Mornin’ ma’am.” Police recruits greet me, standing on edge against an invisible wall, arms straight at their sides as I pass. They model a militarized Southern-gentleman courtesy (regardless of their gender) as I maneuver the halls of the academy. Walking into a gymnasium, I see a diverse group of about fifty recruits are doing push-ups. Although the majority are white, the group also includes a good number of visible Asian and Latino men, several women (including three white women), two Black women, three Latinas, and several Black male recruits, all apparently cis-gender and under thirty. The newly updated facilities are lined with thick exercise mats. Officer Nakamura, the Asian American physical fitness trainer, tells me that the entire group is being punished with push-ups because one of the new recruits had forgotten to submit a required paper. “It teaches camaraderie and accountability,” he says as he screams at the class, “C’mon. Quicker. Get it done!” Officer Nakamura discusses the practice of group discipline and punishment as a way to instill both peer pressure and mutual responsibility between officers. “When they’re out there on the street they need to know that everything they do impacts each other. They got to have each other’s back.”

During another tactical-combat training I observed, recruits were paired up and had to wrestle each other to

the ground. As the recruits threw each other on the mats, struggling, lifting, and slamming each other's bodies, Officer Nakamura told me how this prevents them from using guns. "It's important they get out their aggression in other ways," he said. "They're fit when they leave us here [from the academy], but they become so fat a few years later, they can't chase anyone." "How are they going to catch twenty-something basketball players [on the streets]," Nakamura told me, laughing.

The suggestion that fleeing suspects are imagined as young basketball players is a not-so-thinly-veiled euphemism for Black male youth who police imagine as the naturalized criminals in "the jungle," running through the streets. The fast-running Black (male) youth, endowed with superior strength, height, ability, and speed, are the racialized criminals that the "tactical athletes" are being trained offensively to fight. Nakamura's allusion to criminal Black runners ("basketball players") is not an anomaly but in fact a core white supremacist part of the molding of police-recruit bodies into tactical athletes against Black youth. It also references the pliability and molding of police bodies at different stages in their careers.

The need to mold recruit bodies into hard police who then could turn "soft" again without continued physical training was a recurring theme across different agencies where I conducted research. Officer Puett, a tactical trainer who runs the "force options simulator," was bothered by the low fitness levels of incoming recruits, calling them "weak." He described the "ideal officer" as "a decathlete with anaerobic strength," claiming that their weakness contributes to more serious use-of-force incidents, such as the deployment of batons, Tasers, and guns. "Every time an officer shows up at a scene, it's a gun call" because the "cop has a gun." "Cops must win every time," otherwise there could be a "maniac with a gun." He told me:

You gotta be able to chase the bad guys for three blocks. Fight them for three minutes. . . . That's why we do partner exercises, so, people can develop timing. It's like dancing. You need to have a neurological encoding. Muscle memory is colloquial, nervous system training is in your brain. The win is that you're alive.

To ensure this neurological encoding, recruits are measured through "physical fitness qualifiers" (PFQs): four events designed to assess the athletic capacity of their bodies. They must successfully complete 80 percent of the thirty-six physical conditioning sessions (each session is one hour long). PFQs are made up of four to five "events," which include push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups, and a one-and-a-half-mile flat run. For the second and third PFQs, a timed obstacle course is added. Recruits are scored on the speed at which they complete the event, with faster recruits given more points and a higher score. All recruits must achieve a minimum score to pass. Injuries sustained during academy fitness training are a big issue.

Police recruits are encouraged to begin training four months prior to entering the police academy, and in some

cities I observed, there is even a pre-academy training program to help recruits get in shape. The pre-academy workout instruction includes a guidebook on how to prepare for the academy. There is a log to track daily fitness activities in the four months prior to entering the academy, and recruits must bring this to their first interview.

The front cover of the fitness log features a healthy-looking white male officer in uniform running as if in pursuit of a suspect. This image, which is repeated on a subsequent page, indicates the type of ideal police body to which recruits are expected to conform: large white athletic men. Officer Puett, a muscular white man who stands over six feet tall, complained that his (urban) police academy didn't "look like NFL teams." Lamenting the debilitation of the force, Puett told me, "It is important that departments represent the city . . . but we also have to balance that with fitness for the job." In his opinion, new recruit classes, which include an increase in women, minorities, and other "formerly excluded" people's bodies, just can't hold up to the past. This nostalgia for a past when police were large white men was a theme of the expectations of recruit physicality.

Along with the image of the large white male officer running, the guide tells recruits that "calisthenics," or "the ability to squat, reach, twist, lunge, jump, land, push, and get up and down," is an important part of the actions demanded of police officers when on patrol. The guide suggests that an attention to the exercise regime that calisthenics demands also "conveys physical readiness and discipline" needed to be a law enforcement officer. Indeed, this gendered conditioning output is even naturalized in social scientific research on police bodies. In a 2016 athletic research article, "The Use of 2 Conditioning Programs and the Fitness Characteristics of Police Academy Recruits" (Cocke, Dawes, and Orr 2016), conducted in Australia and the United States, researchers concerned with injuries sustained on the bodies of ill-prepared recruits argued that any type of physical training program can improve the fitness of tactical athletes. What is striking is that in the results section, the authors stated that they "cleaned" the results of female recruit data due to the "heterogeneity in the numbers of female participants" (889–90). They then presented their standardized findings based only on the sixty-one male police-recruit bodies measured for anthropometric and metabolic fitness.

The researchers tested two CrossFit conditioning programs, a branded fitness regime and hardcore philosophy based on Olympic-style weightlifting, interval training, plyometrics (jump training), and other "strongmen"-style exercises. CrossFit markets itself to "Cops and Soldiers" who they describe as "professional athletes," stating: "we argue that the physical preparedness required of the Law Enforcement Officer matches and regularly surpasses that required of Olympic athletes."¹⁰ They continue, "In the sport of Protection and Service, physical fitness may indeed be the most important asset the Officer has at their disposal. CrossFit's mission is to forge a level of physical fitness and mental

toughness that will allow the Officer to triumph against any challenge they face.”¹¹

CrossFit’s envisioning of law enforcement as a “sport of Protection and Service” through Olympic-inspired athleticism mirrors Officer Puett’s officer-as-decathlete comment. Officer Puett described how cops are expected “to chase the bad guys for three blocks” and then “fight them for three minutes” until backup arrives. When they are appropriately repatterned into “tactical athletes,” police bodies are expected to wield weapons with expertise, strike at a moment’s notice, make life-and-death decisions, and rush into dangerous situations, even though recent research has found that the everyday job of police is in fact extremely sedentary and mental (sitting in offices, filling out paperwork, driving vehicles, testifying in court). Officer Puett linked the demand for combat-style training to a “kinetic neuro repatterning” that would turn “soft” police recruits into Rambo-like warriors ready to initiate action at a moment’s notice. This impossible embodied ideal is embedded in the state’s expectations where, in addition to the academy’s internal PFQs, recruits must also pass the state’s physical fitness examination, consisting of:

- A ninety-nine-yard obstacle course that includes simulated curbs, weaving course ways of right and left turns, a wooden horse jump, and forty-yard sprint
- A 165-pound body drag for thirty-two feet on a flat surface
- A six-foot chain-link fence climb
- A six-foot solid-wall climb
- A five-hundred-yard run on a flat track

We can see how physical fitness is about the politics of embodiment, race, and the state, where white logics and norms are woven and molded into the bodies of police recruits. Indeed, as we explore next, white governance is intimately tied to the embodiment of the state. We will see how the ideal decathlete body is, historically, a white supremacist construction linking grandiose police physicality to Greek civilization discourses and Aryan-inspired body logics.

FASCIST INTIMACIES

Decathletes, male Olympians who must train incessantly to outperform in ten track and field events, are considered the “world’s greatest athletes.” The decathlete hails a Western-civilization supremacy, which has long reinforced the mythology of white origin stories and their manifest destiny to rule. The glory of the tactical athlete modeled after Olympian superheroes is yet another naturalized reinforcement of the inevitability of white governance.

As we saw in the previous section, the physicality thought to be needed by police to properly pacify the savages of the urban jungle references the “sport” of policing as an embodied regime inspired by the decathlete. A fascist intimacy can be seen here in how Nazi race-theory aesthetics

celebrated the “Aryan body,” which was modeled after the mythical virility, power, strength, and dynamisms of classical Greece decathletes (Beamish 2011, 30). For example, at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, Hitler used the opportunity to portray the Germans as the “rightful heir” of Aryan classical antiquity through powerful imagery of ancient Greece, such as the *Decathlete* (*Zehnkämpfer*) statue, which still stands in Olympia Park in front of the House of German Sports in Berlin. David Clay Large (2007, 157) describes the “heroic monumentalism” in the piece as “pure ‘Aryan man,’ an icon of buffed-up brutality.”

Nazis prioritized the body as part of their anti-intellectual centering of the racial state (Plunka 2009, 34). The health and hygiene of the physical body was the guiding principle of the social body, where Nazi masculinity focused on producing an “elite force of warriors” in service of the state (34). The members of the SS (*Schutzstaffel*) or “Protective Echelon,” paramilitary corps that protected Hitler and directed policing and enforced Nazi racial policy, were modeled after the decathlete (Pine 2010, 89). Officers underwent a six-month basic training and were given exams at four and ten months broken down into tactics, political education, weapons training, military affairs, practical training, physical education, combat engineering, and automotive mechanics (Weale 2012, 140).

We cannot divorce the fascist intimacies that reinforce the creation of the perfect, able-bodied human from white supremacy, capitalism, and hetero-patriarchy (Campbell 2009; Slater 2016). Deviant and unwanted bodies are removed, isolated, incarcerated, and even executed through dis-abling processes in systems of white supremacy (Annamma 2017). Ableism is a “network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human” (Campbell 2009, 44). This “mythical norm” is part of what Mia Mingus has described as an ideological system where “an able-bodied standard of white supremacy, heterosexism, sexism, economic exploitation, moral/religious beliefs, age and ability” set the stage for humanity.¹² We see this used historically in white supremacist discourses that locate both homosexuality and mixed-race bodies as deviant, mentally pathological, and, hence, a disability (Somerville 2000). As J. Rohrer (2014, 65) argues, the violence of state management reveals “the coercive side of the complex workings of blood logics, compulsory heterosexuality, white supremacy and ableism to produce the normative citizen of the state’s desire.”

I situate the hetero-masculinities molded into police as *intimacies* of the hypermasculinity espoused in global white fascisms (A. Harris 2000, 798–99). Here, I see intimacies as a relatedness produced through “bodily effects”—not just physical but also imagined contact between bodies (Parreñas 2016, 120). Fascist intimacies are thus white supremacist norms produced through the relatedness that

emerges through the *effects* of embodied white racialized co-presence and contact with bodies of color. Officer-recruit trainings—the touching, cuffing, tackling, and arresting of subjects; the imagined encounters with bodies—bring about intimacies’ bodily effects. Intimacy helps us to expand from notions of just physical proximity between bodies to the embodied effects of such contact. The entanglements of white fascist and police bodies are linked through fascist intimacies; they are copresences of each other, embodiments of white supremacist state violence. The bodily effects of white supremacy can thus be revealed in the processing of police recruits’ bodies into mythical decathletes.

Fascist intimacies are riddled with the Social Darwinist “law of the jungle” ideology, which situates the white race as destined to rule (Goodrick-Clarke 2003, 202–3). The “jungle” metaphor is a “conquer or be conquered” mentality linked to anti-Semitic tropes that envisioned Jews as “savage” threats to the Aryan race who must be destroyed (Carroll 1998, 188–89). “Social Darwinists took the law of the jungle and applied it to industrial capitalism and the urban jungle, but Darwin had already taken the law of industrial capitalism and the urban jungle and applied it to the tropical rainforest,” thus the trope returned full circle (Giblett 2011, 256). Indeed, fascist jungle logics operate in embodied police practice, as Didier Fassin (2013, 52) notes; the same is seen in both France and the United States:

The police who work in the [suburban ghettos] are therefore mainly white men who have been given the task of pacifying neighborhoods described as a “jungle,” inhabited mainly by people of African origin who have been represented to them as “savages”—two terms which also recur frequently in the officers’ own comments about the projects and their residents. Remarkably, almost exactly the same terms were used by the Chicago police in William Westley’s study, “The Negro is a savage just out of the jungle.”

These Social Darwinisms imbue global fascist intimacies into embodied police practice. As I next discuss, the uniformed body of police and recruits form part of the embodiment and discomfort of the white supremacy of the state.

UNIFORMED ASSHOLES

Sgt. Hansen, a trainer I interviewed, described police as “assholes” with an “alpha-male mentality” that doesn’t allow them to admit to any faults, and so “they try to maintain that façade that they are mentally better and stronger.” This “asshole” posture is cultivated and enhanced through the academy. Recruits are taught they must “command respect” (recall the group in the training had put this as one of their rules). They engage with each other in a curt and tough manner modeled in the interactions of the trainer, who demonstrated that ultimate respect is obtained by control and submission. This exertion of control and submission is later deployed on the streets in what Moskos (2008, 104) describes as “eye fucking”:

If a group of suspects does not disperse when an officer “rolls up,” the officer will stop the car and stare at the group.

may ignore the officer’s look or engage the officer in a stare-off, known in police parlance as “eye fucking.” This officer’s stare serves the dual purpose of scanning for contraband and weapons and simultaneously declaring dominance over turf.

Moskos describes how policing “requires a certain amount of aggressiveness” for officers to save “face” and not be “punked” (104). This aggressive embodied territoriality first begins in the academy around the language of “respect for the uniform.” A recurring theme is officers’ need to deploy violence to curb perceived disrespect. However, recruits have described feeling disrespect from the lack of resources in the academy itself. For instance, many city agencies cannot afford to provide much of recruits’ gear, which can be quite costly. A Black female recruit lamented the high initial costs, discussing how she had to borrow money from family. “Police hold fundraisers for uniforms,” she told me, pointing to her shirt, “pitiful.”

In addition to uniforms, tactical clothing, boots, running shoes, and other fitness and training clothing, recruits must purchase their own duty gear, such as batons, Tasers, holsters, magazine carriers, mace, handcuffs, and flashlights, and in many cases, they must purchase their own handguns, ammunition, and firearm cleaning kits. They may also need to purchase safety equipment like goggles, ear protection, and a ballistics vest. More recently, tattoo sleeves have become mandatory, as agencies across the country are adopting rules prohibiting the display of tattoos. Recruits must keep their boots shiny at all times, and so polish kits are a necessity. Some recruits expressed excitement about acquiring and using these items, discussing them with care and love as if speaking about a new toy or collector’s item. Guns are an important part of the tools of trade, and loving gun talk was also common.

The embodied burden of the uniforms themselves can make people assholes. Recruits and new officers describe having to become accustomed to the sheer weight of the uniform and its required gear as an additional stressor of the job. Police gear can add up to thirty pounds of weight on a person’s body. The belt alone can weigh up to twenty pounds. Some have described it as like carrying several gallons of milk on their waist. Because of this heavy gear, many officers describe relief when sitting at a desk or riding in a car. Descriptions of gear include it being hot, irritable, uncomfortable, painful, and a burden. One white female officer told me that it was harder learning to carry her police load than being pregnant because the awkward way the belt fits on her hips. “They’re not made for [women’s] hips.” Another Latina female recruit discussed how ballistic vests were not made for women’s bodies, telling me it was difficult for her to find a bulletproof vest that could fit her petite frame.

Hot and burdened by uncomfortable uniforms, recruits and new police display a lot of pent up stress and anxiety. This is heightened by training that encourages and instills fear in the communities in which they will work. During trainings, senior officers discuss their “war wounds” from the streets and provide examples that reinforce jungle logics.

During an introductory Police Sciences course, designed to give recruits an overview of the knowledge, concepts, and understandings and skills that would be needed to prevent crime, maintain law and order, and protect the public, the discussion by the trainer quickly became grim. He started talking about officers being killed on duty and how the job was “life and death,” “yours or theirs.”

For women and people of color, no amount of training can produce the white masculine body expected of the uniformed tactical athlete. During World War I, the drafting of Black and Brown soldiers caused an uproar because of the concern around Black men in uniform.¹³ A local Mississippi newspaper argued that “drafting Negroes as soldiers is a gross travesty and contradiction of the color line creed” (W. Harris 2001, 227). “The sight of Black men in official uniforms bothered many, and the fear that Black soldiers might meet white women in France as social equals bothered some even more” (227). Violence against Black soldiers was so bad in Vicksburg, MS, that whites would not allow Black soldiers to walk on the streets. When Black soldiers complained to local businessmen, they were told “they should not wear their uniforms” in town (227).

Uniforms demonstrate a sense of pride for white (and white adjacent) bodies, and when nonwhite bodies wear uniforms, their sense of being out-of-place makes them seem exceptional. Military and police uniforms serve to further naturalize the white male body as the *proper* body for these uniforms (Plunka 2009, 36). Indeed, neo-Nazi and fascist protestors are known to show up in military or police clothing and with weaponry to assert the white heritage of global dominance.¹⁴ However, the macho masculinity of white supremacy has never been happenstance but rather has always been carefully crafted, molded, trained, and nurtured into youth (Armengol 2014; Ferber 1999; Rose 2015). White boys and men in the South, for instance, performed rituals of attack and violence against Black people to prove their masculinity. White boys were trained and taught racial violence through the “watchful eye” of parents, community members, and other observing adults (Du Rocher 2010, 59):

For white male adolescents, the lynching ritual offered a public venue in which to prove their readiness for manhood. Male adolescents understood that white female sexuality required aggressive protection, and their direct participation in the violent ritual proved their masculinity. Public displays of masculinity at lynching rituals offered white men a space in which to demonstrate their ability to uphold the tenants of white Southern masculinity, as well as perpetuate white supremacy to the next generation.

Under the watchful eye of trainers and superiors, police recruits (male and female) are molded to conform to aggressive masculinity and must perform demonstrations of loyalty to the blue “brotherhood.” To become “one of the boys,” female recruits assert how they are sometimes tougher than their male counterparts. A Black female recruit told me she was tired of being “better,” mentioning her gender was constantly brought up. A white female officer who had just finished the academy told me how she was admired by her

crew for being “tougher” and “harder” on “criminals” than the male officers with whom she worked.

White alpha-male masculinity is crucial to what Kraska and Cubellis (1997, 625) describe as the state’s “violence industry.” They discuss the “seductive powers of paramilitary unit subculture as promoted by for-profit industry. The techno-warrior garb, heavy weaponry, sophisticated technology, hypermasculinity, and ‘real-work’ functions are nothing less than intoxicating for paramilitary unit participants and those who aspire to work in such units” (625). Also alluring is the professionalizing of state-administered force through the creation of “violence specialists” (625).

Sgt. Hansen trains recruits to understand that as police they are the only profession entrusted both to police themselves and to deprive other people of their rights, and that this should be a solemn oath. However, what is not taught at the academy is how the power of violence without consequence is at the core of white supremacy itself. We can see this in the general conditions of impunity toward people of color by the state across an array of institutions—such as the poisoning of water in Flint, MI, the military defense of the Dakota Access Pipeline, the weaponization of schools, mass incarceration, the detention of immigrant families, and the school-to-prison pipeline—which all demonstrate systemic violence and targeted abuse by the state toward people of color even prior to the Trump administration’s blatant racist acts and policies. The police’s engagement with people of color are not an exception to the violence industry’s white supremacy of the state; rather, they are simply its everyday enforcers. As I examine next, it is in the thrill of jungle escapades where police are made.

JUNGLE LOGICS

In *Enforcing Order: An Ethnography of Urban Policing* (2013), Didier Fassin notes the whiteness of police in relation to the Blackness of criminality and the racialization of urban spaces, even in France. He describes the use of anti-Black jungle metaphors by police in reference to the “ghettos” they patrolled, which is something that I also encountered in my own interviews and interactions with white, Black, Latino/a, and Asian American police. Fassin points to William Westley’s 1950 study written during Jim Crow legal segregation and de facto white supremacy, where he noted how police officers similarly called Black residents “monkeys.” Fassin reports that the white officers he worked with in France called Black residents “animals” and “savages” and aggressively policed their bodies and spaces like jungles (52).

Fassin discusses how research on police has tended to render discriminatory policing as either an issue with prejudice (police stigmatize), on the one hand, or as racist (policing differentiates), on the other (152). In the first case, he argues that individual police might target minorities because of their hostility to them. In the second, they might target minorities because people of that background yield better results. Both of these, however, he argues, are forms

of racialization, “the process of differentiating between individuals or groups on the basis of a racial description” (157). Fassin discusses how racialization is complex and takes on many forms that are not always easy to distinguish.

While I agree with Fassin that racialization is key to understanding the complex discriminatory practices of policing, racialization without an analysis of the structural processes of white supremacy does not go far enough. Without situating the ideologies, practices, systems, and logics of white supremacy, we cannot understand what Faye Harrison (1995, 58–59) has described of as the “back-bone” of the racialized social body grounded in the demarcation of the social bottom in the unstable poles of difference between Blackness and white privilege. Racism, racialization, discrimination, inequity, and race relations are central weapons of white supremacy, and these naturalize the hierarchy of the white universal human vis-à-vis the nonwhite sub/semi/nonhuman as the force of social order (Rodriguez 2010, 12; Wynter 1994, 49). As Steve Martinot (2010, 28–29) argues, racialization only persists beneath the disguise of white supremacy. That is, the idea that racialization is an endless process that occurs out of nowhere is part of the naturalization of whiteness (28–29). Whiteness is always an exclusionist value embedded in the cultural logics of social categorization and is dependent on “inferiorization procedures through which it decriminalizes that violence” (28–29):

White supremacy brought itself into existence by inventing the modern concept of race for itself as a hierarchy in which whites occupied the highest level by definition. . . . The ethics of white supremacy revolves around the self-proclaimed sense that white people are the social norm and can dominate because of that.

As Fassin’s example of the racialization of Black residents in the French *banlieu* demonstrates, the violent categorization of people as “savages” and as “animals” is not simply metaphoric. Black and Brown people are policed according to these categorizations, and through this racialization process, the order-maintenance process of globalized white supremacy is naturalized (Burton 2015).

In documenting anti-Black police violence in Bahia, Brazil, as a form of genocide, anthropologist Christen Smith (2016, 83–85) shows that we cannot mistake the state’s performance of remediation efforts with a recognition or acceptance of racialized violence. For instance, in a 2005 hearing about police death squads, the Bahian state prosecutor, Edmundo Reis, stated that “there seemed no tangible connection between racial discrimination and police death squads in Bahia” (Smith 2016, 84). He argued that death squads tended to kill more Black people simply because they were more active in poorer neighborhoods and that the population of Bahia was 85 percent of African descent. As Smith shows, part of the problem with this argument is that it ignores structural racism and “the hegemonic effects of white supremacy.”

Because most of the police in Bahia are themselves Black, and Brazil is known as a cultural Black mecca, it seems unfathomable that pervasive anti-Blackness could exist. However,

as A. Harris (2000, 798) discusses, “the hypermasculine culture of policing helps explain how it is possible for African American police officers to be just as brutal and abusive toward African American citizens as white police officers.” She shows the powerful lure of hegemonic masculinity in police work, stating that “police work offers individuals a chance at all the privileges of hegemonic masculinity in exchange for embracing and excelling at the job” (798). Thus, an “African American police officer can experience full acceptance as a man without feeling that he has betrayed his race” (798).

White supremacy is a multiculturalist project in that proximity to whiteness “is all-too-often desired, pursued, and even inhabited (albeit tenuously) by phenotypically non-white people” (Burton 2015, 41). The seductive powers of this paramilitary subculture in police-recruit training promote the contours of the violence industry but also infuse recruit bodies with an internalized, embodied white supremacy. The embodiment of white norms is therefore part of the day-to-day “checklist of white privilege” that entails a blindness to white knowledge systems (McIntosh 1997, 293–94).

Ethnography of the training of new police provides a particularly revealing entry into the seductive capacity of whiteness as it operates as an invisible system of dominance that structures policing as a profession of racialized state violence. Returning to the cultural diversity training, we must reevaluate the young Black male recruit’s pride at pleasing his white trainer. This moment of choreographed pleasure, a dance between trainer and recruit, is part of the molding and internalization of white supremacy in the jungle academy. Teaching recruits that molding into blueness is about subscribing to white logics is entailed by the pleasure located in the gaze of other officers. The intimate communal pleasure of police embodied copresence is a crucial component in the enfolding and molding of new police bodies. The Black recruit was shaped into properly disidentifying with his cultural background and directed into embodying blue-whiteness through a crafted sculpting. The exchange was dynamic—a homosocial white patriarchal camaraderie at work.

With chin held high, back straight, arms to the side, the Black recruit went from identifying his morals, beliefs, and values from his cultural background to firmly commanding that he must “be open-minded about other people’s cultures, sir!” In that moment, he modeled appropriate behavior for other recruits to follow and demonstrated how to please the trainer. Picking up the subtle cues from the trainer’s slight smile and pleased eyes, the Black recruit appropriately revised himself, allowing for the deference and submission the trainer craved while nevertheless commanding respect and modeling militarized officer submission. Much better than the young white male recruit who had been left in charge, the Black recruit effectively enabled his adjacency to the white supremacist macho power of policing. The homosociality of policing as masculinized camaraderie between officers seen in this moment is what A. Harris (2000, 779) has described

as the “peculiarly male language of sexual violence” that operates among police. We see the aggressive and rough interaction followed by a pleasure from the submission and adherence to group mentality at play.

In this article, I have shown how the crafting of police bodies reproduces white supremacy in policing. I contend that the police academy is embodied and ontological. White cis-hetero masculinity is constantly reinforced as the top of a presumed hierarchy of humanity through somatic intimacies and affirmations. In this, the white supremacist systemic bedrock that founded and nourished this country is shown to not have simply disappeared with the end of slavery or Jim Crow segregation. Rather, as a logic of social organization, white patriarchal supremacy produces conceptions of human difference that are “regimented, institutionalized, and militarized” (Rodriguez 2010, 11).

A small step to counter implicit white supremacy might begin with undoing the crafting and molding of police bodies in the academy. I argue that it is not only in the discourse but in the very Aryan-inspired body logics and aggressive homosocial masculinities that make up the idealized police officer where we see white norms, jungle logics, and racialized violence reproduced. Police recruits are taught that they must be physically prepared for combat against citizens, that the communities they are meant to serve are dangerous “jungles” they must conquer. Through a complex molding, recruits are made into officers who are stressed out, physically and mentally, are burdened with gear and fear, and are taught to only trust those who subscribe to a militarized “blue” mentality. They are effectively made to reinforce a social ordering that assures whiteness is always on top.

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NOTES

1. In the police academies I attended, most of the recruits were under twenty-five or thirty. One of the academy trainers described the majority of recruits as “young,” “little education beyond high school,” and looking for a secure job “without going to college.” According to the National Research Council Panel on High-Risk Youth, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, 1995 report titled *Losing Generations: Adolescents in High-Risk Settings*, until the early part of the twentieth century, most US police officers “were relatively uneducated recruits from the local neighborhood” (157). Today, police are increasingly from outside the communities they police, with some education beyond high school, and in many cases veterans from the military (157).
2. Since 2013, I have conducted research with police officers in California, Florida, and Louisiana. My methods include observing various aspects of law enforcement training and techniques, such as ride-alongs; informal, semistructured, and structured interviews; participant observation of the police academy

(including the shooting range, driving simulations, use-of-force simulations, and basic training); observations of advanced officer trainings, such as gang task-force trainings, global policing trainings, and media-interaction trainings; and classes on racial profiling and cultural sensitivity. Interviews spanned all ranks from captains to police trainers, airport security officers, and even a few chiefs of police. My participant observation included narcotics task-force teams, individual officers in patrol cars, riding along with sergeants, and observing 911 phone operators. I even went on a team drug-sting operation. This research is part of a broader project examining how police were or were not trained on issues of race and religion. To maintain anonymity, I have created a composite police academy, drawing observations and interviews from four different cities.

3. Angela Davis’s speech at Bovard College in 2015: <https://dailytrojan.com/2015/02/23/civil-rights-leader-angela-davis-speaks-at-bovard/>.
4. Johnpeter Horst Grill and Robert L. Jenkins (1992, 668) show how Nazis looked to the “long established system of white supremacy” in the American South “to work out their own system of Aryan supremacy.”
5. Klan recruitment into police forces was not limited to the South. In 1922, when the Los Angeles district attorney raided the local headquarters, he found that the LA chief of police, sheriff, the US attorney, the Bakersfield chief of police and police judge, seven police officers from Fresno, and twenty-five officers from San Francisco—along with “about a tenth of the public officials and police in the rest of California’s cities”—were all Klan members (Williams 2015, 129).
6. In Northern cities like New York and Detroit, police refused to protect Black victims during race riots. Thurgood Marshall described the police in Detroit as “Gestapo” who “against Negroes they used the ultimate in force: night sticks, revolvers, riot guns, sub-machine guns, and deer guns” (Williams 2015, 242).
7. From COPS recruitment pamphlet, “Hiring for the 21st Century Law Enforcement Officer.” <https://ric-zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-w0831-pub.pdf>.
8. From COPS recruitment pamphlet, “Hiring for the 21st Century Law Enforcement Officer.” <https://ric-zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-w0831-pub.pdf>.
9. The Advance Diversity in Law Enforcement initiative was an interagency research initiative of the US Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division and the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) launched in December 2015 to “help law enforcement agencies recruit, hire, retain, and promote officers that reflect the diversity of the communities they serve.” <https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/interagency/police-diversity-report.cfm>.
10. See: <https://www.in.gov/isp/crossfit/213.htm>.
11. See: <https://www.in.gov/isp/crossfit/213.htm>.
12. Mia Mingus’s 2011 keynote speech, “Moving Towards the Ugly: A Politic Beyond Desirability,” at the Femmes of Color Symposium in Oakland, CA. <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2011/08/22/moving-toward-the-ugly-a-politic-beyond-desirability/>.

13. The drafting of Black and Brown soldiers to fight in World War I offered new challenges to racial oppression. With the 1917 entry of the United States into the war, at least 18,000 Puerto Ricans and 367,000 African American men were drafted into the armed forces (W. Harris 2001, 227).
14. During the deadly August 2017 “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, VA, white fascists with camouflage clothing and armed with high-powered assault rifles, helmets, telescopic sights, tactical gear, batons, and bulletproof vests marched through the streets carrying Confederate flags while chanting Nazi-inspired slogans like “blood and soil,” “Jews will not replace us,” and “Heil Trump.” <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/militia-assault-rifles-unite-the-right-rally-charlottesville-virginia-white-supremacy-latest-a7890081.html>.

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